26 October 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Seminar - New Human Resources Priorities Conducted by Towers, Perrin, Forster, and Crosby, Consulting Services (TPF&C)

- 1. The seminar was convened by TPF&C for the benefit of its Washington Office clients. (The purpose being, apparently, to stimulate interest in matters for which TPF&C might be of future service.)
- 2. The featured speaker, Dr. James W. Walker, acknowledged at the outset that there really was nothing "new" per se about human resources, only that the focus had changed somewhat. Instead of attending to external matters, e.g., effects of the projected rate of inflation on the budget; recruitment strategies; etc., Dr. Walker found that a large percentage of the 282 organizations that TPF&C studied recently turned their focus inward. Their primary concern seemed to be directed toward measuring and improving the effectiveness of the business itself.
 - 3. Four major areas of inward focus were identified as priority concerns:
 - a. A concern for the management of business change, e.g.,
 - assessing and managing organizational culture (value systems),
 - restructuring the organization,
 - redirecting the energies and capabilities of professionals and managers,
 - achieving productivity improvements.
 - b. A desire to influence individual performance, e.g.,
 - designing effective appraisal processes,
 - designing incentive and other pay systems,
 - integrating performance evaluation with human resource planning.
 - c. An increased line management orientation, e.g.,
 - strengthening line managers roles,
 - redirecting reliance on staff: decentralizing staff activity,
 - streamlining and updating personnel systems and programs.

- d. Need for effective planning, e.g.,
 - developing a pragmatic planning process,
 - using data effectively (forecasting and analysis),
 - involving managers in linking personnel planning with organizational planning.
- 4. Dr. Walker concluded his remarks by reminding the audience that organizational culture must be understood if any personnel management strategy is to be successful. He suggested that there is the "desired" organizational culture of which top management officials are knowledgeable and for which they are the prime advocates; then there is the "actual" organizational culture which reflects the perceptions and values of the workforce. A knowledge of both the actual culture and the impact of current personnel management systems are prerequisite to moving toward or achieving the desired culture of the organization.
- 5. A panel discussion followed Dr. Walker's presentation with representative specialists from TPF&C responding to concern and questions raised by the attendees. The subject matter was varied; it often dealt with specific company concerns (the majority of attendees were from the private sector). Merit compensation and performance appraisal issues seemed to monopolize the discussion although considerable time was also given to the question of how to get the attention and support of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in dealing with personnel management issues and programs.
- 6. All things considered, the three-hour seminar was worthwhile. Personally, I believe it is always important to remember that one is not alone in this business. Many personnel management problems and concerns are common to both the private and public sectors, and the sharing of ideas is generally always worthwhile.

P&PS/OP

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